

# The Hartwell Sun The Sun. 1876

## **The Intolerance of Tolerance**

Ronald Reagan once said, "The frustrating thing is that those who are attacking religion claim that they are doing it in the name of tolerance - Question: Isn't the real truth that they are intolerant of religion?" (1984)

Never in the history of our country has this word ever been used so much and understood so little!

William Federer, in his book *Backfire*, noted that in Noah Webster's original dictionary, *Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 edition, the meaning of the word tolerance was: Allowance of religious opinions and modes of worship in a state, when contrary to or different from those of the established church or belief - the Protestant religion is tolerated in France, the Roman Catholic in Great Britain.

Now look in today's Webster's Dictionary and the meaning of tolerance is: to put up with, bear, forbear.

The point here is that originally, "tolerance" was seen in light of the oppressive rules of kings who dictated what the people were to believe. Individuals who dared to follow their consciences rather than the dictates of a despot soon found themselves the object of government-sponsored persecution.

Therefore, many chose to flee these countries that practiced religious intolerance to find a place where they could practice their beliefs without governmental interference.

So, where did these pilgrims flee to in order to get this needed relief from being persecuted for their religious beliefs? You're right, America!

Think about that for a moment. Where did this concept of tolerance originate? We can go ahead and eliminate medieval Europe. How about France? No, it would not have made it through the atheistic French government that produced the guillotine. Can we look to the former Soviet Union? No, because thousands lost their lives because of their faith.

What about Communist China? No, again thousands have died and today Christian leaders are routinely arrested.

Well, what about Saudi Arabia or any other Middle Eastern country? Still the answer is no! There is a death penalty for anyone converting to anything outside of Islam.

Let's just get right to the bottom of this. The undisputed truth is that real tolerance came from the Judeo-Christian beliefs of America's founders!

It is the American Judeo-Christian beliefs that made the most meaningful and lasting impact of tolerance in this world. It is from the God of the Bible that we derive our religious freedom to worship or not to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience.

The fact of the matter is that those who once championed the need for tolerance are the ones who are no longer tolerated. It is as if there now exists some kind of "secular Taliban" with "atheistic Jihads" committed to establishing America on the religion of secular humanism.

It is easily recognized by its intolerance of any expression of religion in the public square unless it agrees with its own ideology!

It seems that in our day, if anyone seeks to express any views that are based upon deeply held religious convictions those views are written off as "intolerant" or simply "out of the mainstream."

There has arisen an alarmist view regarding any hint of moral absolutes (for example, The Ten Commandments).

Most conservative people of faith do not want to "take over." All they want is a seat at the table and to have an honest, open debate about issues that concern them. I think most of them would like to do this minus all of the name-calling and innuendos.

They are more concerned about our country turning into an oligarchy than a theocracy!

Even if you don't agree with the convictions of social conservatism, you must agree that the pendulum has swung from "freedom of religion" to "freedom from religion" and from "moral absolutes" to "absolutely no morals!"

Most, if not all, of the founding fathers would be labeled as "out of the mainstream" if they were alive today and did and said as they did in the past. Today's tolerance has become an acceptance that is tolerant of anyone as long as they believe like "we" do. In other words, no absolutes.

We are living in a day when tolerance is what we have toward anyone, except someone who has deeply held religious moral convictions.

Ronald Reagan was right when he said in his radio address (1984), "The pendulum has swung too far toward intolerance against genuine religious freedom. It is time to redress the balance."

Until that time, we will continue to experience the "intolerance of tolerance."

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